

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-18 (Canceled)

19. (Withdrawn) A method of operating gaming devices interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:

- detecting a player associated with a gaming device;
- sending a player identification number from the gaming device to the host computer over the network;
- sending a status request from the host computer to a gaming device;
- transmitting accounting data from the gaming device to the host computer over the same network; and
- associating the accounting data with the player identification number for player tracking purposes.

20. (Withdrawn) A method of operating gaming devices according to claim 19 further comprising reconfiguring a gaming device over the network, wherein the reconfigured gaming device modifies a jackpot payout schedule associated therewith.

Claims 21-87 (Canceled)

88. (Previously added) A progressive gaming system comprising:

- a central computer coupled, at least indirectly, to gaming terminals each of which is coupled to a notification device for indicating the win of a progressive prize;
- a first plurality of said gaming terminals being eligible for a first progressive prize, based on first contributions from said first plurality of gaming terminals;
- a second plurality of said gaming terminals being eligible for a second progressive prize, based on second contributions from said second plurality of gaming terminals;
- said central computer receiving information regarding said first contributions and transmitting information, when said first progressive prize has been won, to indicate a win using said notification device coupled to one of said first plurality of gaming terminals; and
- said central computer receiving information regarding said second contributions and transmitting information when said second progressive prize has been won, to indicate a win using said notification device coupled to one of said second plurality of gaming terminals;

wherein the same said central computer calculates both the amount of said first progressive prize, when said first progressive prize has been won, and the amount of said second progressive prize, when said second progressive prize has been won.

89. (Previously added) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 88, wherein said first and second pluralities of gaming terminals have at least one gaming terminal in common.

90. (Previously added) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 88, further comprising a cluster controller which receives contribution information from at least some of said first plurality of gaming terminals and transmits said information regarding said first contributions to said central computer.

91. (Previously added) A progressive gaming system comprising a central computer coupled, at least indirectly, to gaming terminals each of which is coupled to a notification device for indicating the win of a progressive prize;

a first plurality of said gaming terminals being eligible for a first progressive prize, based on first contributions from said first plurality of gaming terminals;

a second plurality of said gaming terminals being eligible for a second progressive prize, based on second contributions from said second plurality of gaming terminals;

said central computer receiving information regarding said first contributions and transmitting information, when said first progressive prize has been won, to indicate a win using said notification device coupled to one of said first plurality of gaming terminals; and

said central computer receiving information regarding said second contributions and transmitting information, when said second progressive prize has been won, to indicate a win using said notification device coupled to one of said second plurality of gaming terminal;

wherein each of said first plurality of gaming terminals, following play on said gaming terminal, provides an output indicative of a result of said play;

wherein said central computer repeatedly receives, stores or transmits information indicative of a decision as to whether said first progressive prize has been won; and

wherein said decision is independent of said result of play in any of said first plurality of gaming terminals.

92. (Previously added) A progressive gaming system as claimed in claim 91 wherein a decision that said first progressive prize has been won is made only after an event selected from the group consisting of a push of a button, a predetermined result from a spin of a wheel of fortune, and a draw of a predetermined token from a plurality of tokens.

93. (Previously added) A method for providing a progressive gaming system implemented using central computer coupled, at least indirectly, to gaming terminals each of which is coupled to a notification device for indicating the win of a progressive prize, the method comprising:

receiving, in said central computer, first information indicating contributions towards a first progressive prize from a first plurality of said gaming terminals eligible for said progressive prize;

receiving, in said central computer, second information indicating contributions towards a second progressive prize from a second plurality of said gaming terminals eligible for said second progressive prize;

transmitting from said central computer, when said first progressive prize has been won, information for activating at least one notification device coupled to one of said first plurality of gaming terminals; and

transmitting from said central computer, when said second progressive prize has been won, information for activating at least one notification device coupled to one of said second plurality of gaming terminals.

94. (Previously added) A method, as claimed in claim 93, wherein said first and second pluralities of gaming terminals have at least one gaming terminal in common.

95. (Previously added) A method, as claimed in claim 93, further comprising: receiving, in a cluster controller, contribution information from at least some of said first plurality of gaming terminals and transmitting said information regarding said first contributions from said cluster controller to said central computer.

96. (Previously added) A method as claimed in claim 93 further comprising: providing output, by each of said first plurality of gaming terminals, following play on said gaming terminal, indicative of a result of said play; and

repeatedly transmitting information to said central computer indicative of a decision as to whether said first progressive prize has been won wherein said decision is independent of said result of play in any of said first plurality of gaming terminals.

97. (Previously added) A method, as claimed in claim 96 wherein a decision that said first progressive prize has been won is made only after an event selected from the group consisting of a push of a button, a predetermined result from a spin of a wheel of fortune, and a draw of a predetermined token from a plurality of tokens.

98. (Previously added) Apparatus for providing a progressive gaming system implemented using a central computer coupled, at least indirectly, to gaming terminals each of which is coupled to a notification device for indicating the win of a progressive prize, the apparatus comprising:

means, in said central computer, for:

receiving, first information indicating contributions towards a first progressive prize from a first plurality of said gaming terminals eligible for said first progressive prize; and

receiving, second information indicating contributions towards a second progressive prize from a second plurality of said gaming terminals eligible for said second progressive prize; and

means, in said central computer, for:

transmitting from said central computer, when said first progressive prize has been won, information for activating at least one notification device coupled to one of said first plurality of gaming terminals; and

transmitting from said central computer, when said second progressive prize has been won, information for activating at least one notification device coupled to one of said second plurality of gaming terminals.

99. (Previously added) A progressive gaming system as claimed in claim 91 wherein a decision that said first progressive prize has been won is made only after passage of a randomly selected time duration following a predetermined event.

100. (Previously added) A method as claimed in claim 96 wherein a decision that said first progressive prize has been won is made only after passage of a randomly selected time duration following a predetermined event.

101. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 88, wherein said central computer is constructed and arranged to select which gaming terminals to include in the first plurality of gaming terminals.

102. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 101, wherein said central computer is constructed and arranged to select which gaming terminals to include in the second plurality of gaming terminals.

103. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 102, further comprising a user-operated input device coupled to said central computer to permit such gaming terminal selection responsive to user-effected action at said input device.

104. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 88, wherein said notification device comprises a display.

105. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 104, wherein said display comprises a casino display.

106. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 88, wherein said notification device comprises means for making a bonus pay at one of said gaming terminals.

107. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 88, wherein said notification device comprises a credit meter that increments in response to a prize win.

108. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 91, wherein said central computer is constructed and arranged to select which gaming terminals to include in the first plurality of gaming terminals.

109. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 108, wherein said central computer is constructed and arranged to select which gaming terminals to include in the second plurality of gaming terminals.

110. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 109, further comprising a user-operated input device coupled to said central computer to permit such gaming terminal selection responsive to user-effected action at said input device.

111. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 91, wherein said notification device comprises a display.

112. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 111, wherein said display comprises a casino display.

113. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 91, wherein said notification device comprises means for making a bonus pay at one of said gaming terminals.

114. (New) A progressive gaming system, as claimed in claim 91, wherein said notification device comprises a credit meter that increments in response to a prize win.

115. (New) A method, as claimed in claim 93, further comprising selecting which gaming terminals to include in the first plurality of gaming terminals responsive to central computer action.

116. (New) A method, as claimed in claim 115, further comprising selecting which gaming terminals to include in the second plurality of gaming terminals responsive to central computer action.

117. (New) A method, as claimed in claim 116, wherein said central computer is coupled to a user-operated input device and wherein selecting which gaming terminals to include comprises selecting gaming terminals responsive to user-effected action at said input device.

118. (New) A method, as claimed in claim 93, wherein said notification device comprises a display.

119. (New) A method, as claimed in claim 118, wherein said display comprises a casino display.

120. (New) A method, as claimed in claim 93, wherein said method further includes activating the notification device and wherein activating the notification device comprises making a bonus pay at one of said gaming terminals.

121. (New) A method, as claimed in claim 120, wherein making a bonus pay further comprises incrementing a credit meter.

122. (New) Apparatus, as claimed in claim 98, wherein said central computer is constructed and arranged to select which gaming terminals to include in the first plurality of gaming terminals.

123. (New) Apparatus, as claimed in claim 122, wherein said central computer is constructed and arranged to select which gaming terminals to include in the second plurality of gaming terminals.

124. (New) Apparatus, as claimed in claim 123, further comprising a user-operated input device coupled to said central computer to permit such gaming terminal selection responsive to user-effected action at said input device.

125. (New) Apparatus, as claimed in claim 98, wherein said notification device comprises a display.

126. (New) Apparatus, as claimed in claim 125, wherein said notification device comprises a casino display.

127. (New) Apparatus, as claimed in claim 98, wherein said notification device comprises means for making a bonus pay at one of said gaming terminals.

128. (New) Apparatus, as claimed in claim 98, wherein said notification device comprises a credit meter that increments in response to a prize win.